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INAUGURAL MESSAGE

OF

GOVERNOR THOMAS C. FLETCHER,

TO THE

TWENTY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

STATE OF MISSOURI.

IN SESSION JANUARY 2, 1865.

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MESSAGE.

SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES :

In the name of Truth, of Justice, of Freedom, and of Progress, God has permitted us a political triumph, bringing with it the solemn responsibility of promoting these great principles by an enforcement of the fundamental law for securing the peace, happiness and prosperity of the people of the State.

Through the blood and fire of a civil war, we have attained to a new era, effulgent with the glory of the decree of the People in their sovereign capacity, emancipating themselves from servitude to principles and policies which have weighed down their energies, opposed barriers to their progress, and armed the hand of Treason for the shedding of patriot blood.

The only instance in the world's history of a rebellion against an existing Government in the name and for the sake of Slavery, has resulted in the enlargement of Liberty; and the retributive Nemesis has sent the system of Slavery crashing down to hopeless destruction in the conflagration of a civil strife lighted by its own hand.

All men fit to be citizens and partakers of the common rights accorded men in civilized communities, must regard and treat as final and conclusive the recent deliberate and solemn verdict of the people of Missouri, rendered in the full exercise of reason restored by the calamities of the war, in favor of closing the gates of Janus and restoring the power of the civil law, and against the mad attempts to defy the authority of the National Government. The civilized world which has been observant of, not less than our own community which has been participant in this unparalleled conflict, must, in that verdict, acknowledge that the position of Mis-

souri, in the van of the free and progressive States whose attachment to the Union defies earthly power to rend, is as enduring as our own eternal and solid mountains of iron, which, based in the deep center of our State, lift their firm brows toward the sky in colossal majesty.

Being victorious everywhere, let magnanimity now distinguish our action; and, having nothing more to ask for party, let us, forgetful of past differences, seek only to promote the general good of the people of the whole commonwealth. While, therefore, we let past dangers teach us provision for future security, let us welcome to a participation in our coming prosperity and greatness as a State, all who unite with us in upholding and defending the authority of the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Missouri, of the laws enacted in pursuance thereof, and of the officers selected for their enforcement.

Behind us we leave the wrecks of old institutions, and all the bitter memories of the terrible Past, retaining only the lessons of wisdom our experience of them has taught us. Before us, glowing with promise and fruitful with hope, is the mighty Future; but be assured, that in readjusting the framework of our torn community to its requirements, we shall need, to enable us to grasp that promise and realize that hope, all the energies of our truest and best citizens.

In point of physical advantage, in the combination of all the elements of wealth, in the invitations that are held out to enterprise, and in the magnificent and swift rewards that wait on industry, no area on the Western Continent containing an equal number of square miles, can compare with our own State. While embracing a greater number of acres of good agricultural land than any other State in the Union, Missouri has more iron than all the other States combined; lead in quantities greater than elsewhere discovered in the world; mines of cobalt and zinc, and lodes of copper; whole districts of country underlaid with strata of coal; almost illimitable forests of the most useful timber, including the giant resiniferous pine, inviting the hand of unshackled industry and liberal enterprise to gather its wealth; prairie and forest diversified everywhere by streams affording unequaled water power; one of the largest rivers of the world flowing through her center, and another washing the whole length of her border.

In contemplating our natural resources, gratitude for their bestowment and pride in their possession struggle for the ascendancy; and we are more grateful and prouder still in reflecting upon the heroic resolution with which our noble State has shaken off a thralldom fatal to prosperity and at war with justice—has buried the dead Past, and advanced the standard of Freedom as the emblem of her future faith. We have every reason to incite us henceforth to great achievement. We have a State that promises to be the grand central figure of a cluster of republics, victoriously emergent with new splendor from the recent conflict of industrial systems. There is enough of accomplishment already attained to nerve us on to the labor of regenerating our political structure, so as to cause it to blaze in the sight of the nations of the earth, the brightest gem in the diadem of Liberty.

Henceforth Missouri shall be an asylum for all nationalities and races and peoples; the repository of wealth, and a theater for the development of the labor and enterprise of the hand and spirit of Industry; and the home of free thought, free speech and a free press, where the prejudices of caste and class have no legal embodiment or political encouragement. She shall be a central mart for the interchange of the products of the North and the South, the East and the West, through the rivers of her great basin and the system of railways centering in her metropolis. She shall be a highway for the commerce of the two oceans, borne by the inland transit lines that carry the freights between Europe and Asia. She shall proffer a secure and guarded repose to all consciences and all religious beliefs, untied by any secular control, yet upheld and encircled by a public sentiment upon which faith in God has taken a new hold from the experiences of an unparalleled national preservation.

Let it be announced that in the new era which has come, ours is to be the first of States, with the largest freedom and the widest charities. Let this be a State where, with the administration of inflexible justice, the abandonment of mere partyisms, and the domination of industrial politics, all the advances of statute law progress towards combining labor and capital, rather than placing them in the cruel antagonisms of the Past; where the light of hope is shut out by the fundamental law from no human being of whatever race, creed or color; but where a free people, heeding the

stroke of inevitable destiny on the horologe of Time in the great crisis of changeful progress, guards the right of permitting the position and privileges of every man to be such as his virtues, talents, education, patriotism, enterprise, industry, courage or achievements may confer upon him.

It should be our effort to preserve harmony, in every department of the State Government, with all the measures of the National Administration. We have the sympathy of the Federal Executive in the sufferings and losses entailed on us by the War, and in our consequent intolerance of treason and rebellion. The strong hand of the General Government may be relied upon to sustain the patriotic, prudent and vigorous measures of unimpugned loyalty.

I hope an early act of the Legislature will evince an appreciation of the services of the men who, by their heroic bravery, have made the name of a Missouri soldier a proud title. While the loyal people of the State, and the soldiers themselves, testify their feeling by generous contributions for the support and education of the children of our dead heroes, their efforts should be met, if it be necessary, by liberal legislative action, even though, in order to avoid the imposition of additional taxes upon our distressed people, it should have to be done at the expense of industrial interests heretofore aided by the State. Give the orphans of war—the children of the People—a home and a culture of mind to fit them for preserving the institutions in defense of which their fathers died.

In this connection I would call your attention to the propriety of the expression of the gratitude of Free Missouri to the loyal men of her sister Free States who have stood beside us, and made many of our mountains, hills, valleys, prairies and river shores historic by their bravery in our defense.

It is a duty to ourselves, so far as possible to put every influence, power and benefit conferred by civil and military office in the State in harmony with the spirit of the principles and policy indorsed by the people in the recent election; and I must add, that for all appointments to be made by the Executive, I shall prefer the men who have served with honor in the field, in defense of the Union, they possessing equal qualifications in all other respects with other applicants.

Our educational system should receive at all times the earnest care and consideration of the Legislature. It must be so moulded as best to resist the inroads of war, and conserve the ends of peace. Perhaps no better foundation can be had than the admirable Common School system now so well organized and engrafted upon our public policy. To this, however, a superstructure should be added, different from that which has hitherto obtained. The requirements of self-defense will suggest that more attention be given in our educational course to those departments of instruction which qualify for military service. And in devoting our energies to the means of supplying more extended knowledge to the young men of our State, it would be well to confine the furnishing of such facilities to those scientific branches which may contribute most directly to the practical purposes of life, and to the immediate development of the resources of the State.

There are two offices which belong to education: the first is the imparting of a clear understanding of elements, and the second is the application of those elements in drill and practice. I rejoice to see that the educational tendencies of the day throughout the country are manifested in the foundation of schools for specialties of instruction, agriculture, the only firm and immutable foundation and source of a nation's greatness, receiving the largest share of attention.

I would, therefore, recommend in this connection a revision of the organization of the State University, and its transformation into two or more departments bearing directly upon the agricultural and mineral wealth that so abounds in our State; and that it be recast and relocated, if this shall be deemed expedient for its new design, and constituted a free academy, devoting itself to the task of gathering the statistics of our resources, to invite immigration; furnishing brief yet full courses of instruction, that may fit the farmer for more scientific methods of culture of the soil and advance the very important interests of horticulture; and sending forth annually hundreds of young men enlisted in bringing to light the mineral masses that vein our soil, or superintending the development of those already found. Such an institution would at once become an efficient instrument of progress, and would repay ten-fold whatever expenses might attend its inauguration and support. If necessary, to increase its endowments, I recommend the sale of the State Tobacco Warehouse property, and the investment of the proceeds for that purpose.

I also recommend the revival of the law providing for a Superintendent of Common Schools.

The law for the organization, government and support of the Militia should be so modified as to secure its adaptability to the condition of the people of the State, and the greater efficiency of an arm of the service upon which we are to rely, in the future as in the past, as an indispensable means of our security in time of invasion, and to local organizations of which we are to look as the means of ridding the State of the bands of murderers and robbers who are yet prowling in our forests. The right of citizenship and of a home in Missouri ought to be inseparable from the duty of assisting in its defense. No sum of money should be adequate to the purchase of the exemption of an able-bodied man from this duty. Numbers of men will not compensate for want of skill in the use of arms. The men should be so classified, that one-half of them may be called into service, when the exigency requires it, without detriment to the ordinary and now so necessary peaceful pursuits of life. Thorough drill and discipline will render one-half equal in efficiency to the whole number of imperfectly instructed and undisciplined men. A bill embodying my view on this subject is in course of preparation, and will at an early day be presented for your consideration.

The officers of the militia must be men indued with true courage and the spirit of reaching a final result in this war, who understand the principles of our government, which require the subordination of the military to the civil authority, and who are efficient in drill and discipline.

Another decade of years brings the labor of revising our statutes, increased by the necessity of conforming them to the new Constitutional provisions about to be made. Great care should be taken, in framing our general laws, to prevent special legislation, by obviating as far as possible its necessity.

The amendments to the Constitution will require the erasure of the word "slave" from our statutes, the abolition of all distinctions of color in the law relating to crimes and their punishment, and the abrogation of all laws for the fostering and protection of the interests of slavery.

The enforcement of the civil law to repress the tendencies to lawlessness begotten of treason, will probably add to the number of convicts usually employed in the Penitentiary. The object of the law being the reformation as well as punishment of convicts, I call your attention to the manifest inadequacy of provision made for the employment of a Chaplain for the Penitentiary, and recommend that such compensation be provided as will secure the entire time and effort of a competent man, for their moral and religious instruction.

The act concerning elections will, it is hoped, have to be so amended as to meet the requirements of new constitutional provisions for guarding the palladium of our liberties against the wily and unscrupulous approach and unsanctified touch of alien enemies, whose hands are stained with the blood of Union men, of traitors who have alienated themselves by flight beyond the jurisdiction of the United States to avoid duty to the government or escape punishment for the crime of treason, and of men who have written their own infamy by enrolling themselves as in sympathy with treason and rebellion, and who have not since erased it by the services and conduct of patriots.

More effectually to guard the ballot-box, a law is necessary requiring a registration of all qualified voters in each county, and permitting only those to vote who are thus registered. Men who have by rebellion disavowed allegiance to the Government, should be permitted to regain the privileges of citizenship only through the means provided by the naturalization laws of the United States; while to the liberty loving foreigner who makes his home under the government of his choice, and for which he is willing to fight, liberal laws should be enacted as soon as permitted by the letter of the State Constitution, shortening the probationary term preceding his investment with the elective franchise for all the purposes of State elections.

We should be connected, through an agent, with the Immigration Bureau, and take the necessary measures for the collection and publication of statistical information, not only conveying to the energetic and enterprising inhabitants of the more densely populated States, as well as to those of foreign countries, a knowledge of our mineral wealth, of the fertility of our soil and of the cheapness of our land, but also bringing home to them the facts of the adaptability of our soil and climate to the cultivation of the

grape and the growing of fruits. The wines and fruits of Missouri will be sources of incalculable wealth, as has been demonstrated by our own people. The very perfection of fruits has been obtained here, and our wines are becoming the favorites wherever their excellence has been tested. Show to the immigrant the advantages we possess for wool growing, and that he may graze upon our hills the flocks from which may be sheared the greater part of the 100,000,000 pounds of wool annually imported from foreign countries for our manufactories. Let the exhibition of samples of our hemp and tobacco attest their superiority, accompanied by facts and figures showing the enormous returns yielded by our fertile soils in these and other productions. And bid them come, where the abundance of industrial resources renders labor independent, and will make freedom perpetual.

To secure the return of the Union men, who, unable to fight, have sought safety in the Free States, it is only necessary for them to know that the military policy now adopted in Arkansas and Missouri will prevent the return of the armies of the enemy to our soil; that the united action of our own people will soon free us of the presence of the lawless depredators who, in small bodies, yet infest some parts of the State; that loyal men will be secure in life and property, while traitors wanting security to either will cease to intrude their presence upon us; that the policy of the Department of the Missouri is, unheralded, silently but effectually to stamp enduring peace on the State, and ere long to make the voice of the law potential in all its hitherto silent forums; and that Free Missouri, like all other Free States, will only hear the distant clash of arms without interruption to the prosperity of her people.

We must deeply regret, as one of the great calamities of the war, that we have been deprived of the means of meeting the obligations of the State, one of the results of which has been the accumulation of a large amount of unpaid interest on our bonds, as shown by the able and very satisfactory Message of my predecessor.

The subject of our indebtedness, and the present and prospective condition of our finances, should be carefully considered, with a view to the restoration of the credit of the State. I suggest that if the General Assembly can, at this session, devise the ways and means for the uncertain

expenses of our militia, for defending the securities of our creditors, as well as our homes, and determine our financial condition in the future, so as to place beyond doubt our compliance with any new undertakings, we fund all our over-due coupons, including those to a date to which our bond-holders may look with certainty for the payment of a per centum of accruing interest, and provide for funding the remainder, increasing the per centum of payments annually until we can meet the whole of the coupons as they fall due; the bonds thus to be issued for accrued interest, and the portion of interest we are hereafter unable to meet, to be styled interest bonds, to carry no interest for say three years, then three per centum per annum, increasing the rate of interest one per centum per annum, for two years, the maximum rate of interest to be five per centum, to run twenty years from date. If the prospects of our several railroads taken into consideration justify it, discrimination should be made in the time of resuming payment of full interest on their bonds.

Let our undertakings be only such as we can certainly meet, and let them at the same time be such as become a people whose honesty is unshaken by misfortune, who are resolved to pay their debts, and who have only to let prudence and energy characterize the management of their known assets and resources, to preserve the confidence of their creditors and insure their ability to meet their obligations.

We have seven Railroads, with an aggregate of 826 miles of finished railroad in the State, for which we have incurred liabilities amounting to \$23,700,000, exclusive of interest. The only finished railroad in the State promptly meets the interest on the three millions of bonds issued to aid its construction. All the other roads are in default of payment of interest due by them. They are ample security for the amounts advanced to them respectively. Almost the whole debt of the State has been contracted on their account. All the interests of the State, and the attainment of the greatness to which we aspire, are involved in their completion. If the light of events has revealed that we have committed an error in attempting to build up at once a whole system of railroads, instead of directing all our means and energies first to building those most necessary to our wants, and consequently most certain to yield large net earnings, let us at once seek to correct that error. If, in the present or a changed relation of the State to them, we cannot command the means for

their completion, and if they cannot be made to yield at least a portion of the accruing interest on the bonds loaned them respectively, with reasonable prospect of their completion or increased net earnings, enabling them to meet the whole interest, then it will be our duty, in order to restore the credit of the State and to save the people from burthensome taxation, to foreclose our first mortgage liens on them, and by their sale reduce the State debt to a sum within our easy control, and, private enterprise failing to do so, trust to our future prosperity to afford the means for their completion.

These important questions will be the subject of a special communication which I shall hereafter have occasion to make to the General Assembly.

I recommend that all charters heretofore granted to railroad companies or other corporations, and forfeited by non-user, be repealed.

I call your attention to the propriety of using all the power possessed by the General Assembly over our railroad and other corporations, to compel the exercise of their entire influence in favor of loyalty. I hope that every privilege and benefit accorded them will be coupled with the condition of forfeiture or penalty for knowingly contracting with or employing a traitor, and that the power to enforce such forfeiture or penalty may be conferred on the Executive. There are no degrees in loyalty; and whoever refuses to use all the influence he is possessed of in favor of upholding the authority of the National Government, is a traitor.

The victorious armies of the Republic are with deadly thrusts piercing the enemy on every side. The giant Rebellion, bleeding at every pore, begins to reel and faint. Our Sherman, with his veteran braves, stands on the Ocean's beach, gazes back at the last deep mortal wound inflicted, and waits only to see if another is necessary. The legions of Grant, Butler, Sheridan, Thomas and Canby, are rushing on to complete the work. The coming spring-time will bring the final blow, and amid the battle-cry of Freedom the death of the Rebellion will be consummated, and blessed Peace once more breathe its benisons over the land.

Reposing implicit reliance in that Power to which all earthly authority is subject, and assured that, if we are true to ourselves, a wise and just Prov-

idence will lead us up the golden stairs of a radiant Future, to the attainment of the high destiny clearly marked out for us in the bestowment of our wondrous material resources, I assume the responsibilities and undertake the labors of the position assigned me by the too generous partiality of the citizens of my native State. As your fellow laborer, I claim your assistance, your confidence, your forbearance, and your sympathy. While doubtful of my own abilities, I yet have unfaltering faith that all earnest effort to support and advance the true principles of Republican Government, as approved by the intelligence and patriotism of the American People in the recent election, will secure me the encouragement and engird me with the support of the loyal men of Missouri, and enable me, when my official term shall expire, to resign back into the hands from which I receive it the trust now committed to my charge, strengthened and adorned by the application of radical democratic principles.

THOMAS C. FLETCHER.

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